

REUBEN H. FITTS.

---

APRIL 11, 1884.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

---

Mr. LOVERING, from the Committee on Invalid Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 766.]

*The Committee on Invalid Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 766) granting a pension to Reuben H. Fitts, have examined the claim, and respectfully submit the following report :*

Reuben H. Fitts enlisted September 21, 1864, and was discharged June 15, 1865.

Claimant alleges that in the spring of 1865, about the time of President Lincoln's assassination, one day after being relieved from picket he went to a brook to wash, where he was seized with some kind of a fit and fell unconscious, striking against a stone, cutting a gash in and injuring his head, from the effects of which he has never recovered, and as a sequence he has always since had bad spells, a sinking feeling, with terrible pains in his head, and at times loss of sight, and has been continuous since his discharge, and has unfitted him for manual labor most of the time. His application for a pension was rejected by the Pension Department on the ground of no record of alleged disease, and inability to furnish necessary medical evidence connecting it with the service.

This case was put in the hands of a special examiner of the Pension Department for investigation and report, and which report furnishes strong parol evidence in the soldier's favor.

Capt. George C. Houghton—

Remembers soldier being sick, and that he had some kind of a fit. At time of President Lincoln's assassination they were called upon to do much more than usual duty, and which was a continuous strain on the system.

Frank B. Senter, a comrade—

Found soldier in an unconscious condition, with his head lying partially in the water; he had a bundle of clothes partly washed; face covered with blood from a cut in head. He and another comrade carried soldier into camp.

George F. Tebbetts, comrade—

Saw the two comrades bring soldier into camp at time of injury; head cut and bleeding.

Cyrus W. Truell, comrade, says:

Saw him after he was brought into camp; attended him, as he came from same town; washed sand and blood from his head. Remembers the soldier did no more duty.

All the comrades who testify say—

The soldier had been well and had done duty up to time of injury.

Joseph Hubbard, Austin Cass, and John Rowe testify to long acquaintance with soldier prior to enlistment, and that he was healthy, robust, and sound.

Alvan D. Dudley, an employer of soldier, says :

For eight years prior to soldier's enlistment he worked regularly. Never knew him to be sick. If he had been he would have known it.

Lewis H. Cate—

Worked with soldier after discharge. Often complained of his head, and would be compelled to leave his work from it. Often heard soldier say he injured his head while in the army.

Dr. Abel Wares :

Been family physician since 1876; has known soldier since 1870; has frequently treated him. His conviction, from knowledge of case, was that his disability was of the "nervous system, depending upon cerebral deficiencies." Since he has known him he has not been in a fit condition to labor any length of time. Has regarded the cause of his present condition to have been some remote injury to head, and which set up a process disturbing the brain to such an extent as to destroy the co-ordination of the functions of the brain, and that the remote cause of injury has caused a change in the tissues of the brain. In taking a history of the case he understood original injury was received in the army.

The special examiner, in closing his report, says :

I will add that soldier is living in poverty, his sole assistance being a daughter eighteen years of age, who does the best she can to support him. If the claim should be admitted the assistance will be none too timely at an early date.

Your committee are of the opinion that the case is well sustained by the evidence, and would therefore recommend the passage of the accompanying bill.